

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 64  
By Hood

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Charles K. Wolfe  
upon winning the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award  
for his book, *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of  
the Grand Ole Opry*.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those  
Tennesseans who have made noteworthy accomplishments in their chosen professions; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Charles K. Wolfe is one such noteworthy individual deserving the  
recognition of this body, as he has recently celebrated the success of his award-winning literary  
work, entitled *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of The Grand Ole Opry*; and

WHEREAS, having garnered national acclaim, Dr. Wolfe's book on the Grand Ole Opry  
has won two of the literary world's most prestigious awards for books in the music field: the  
*Rolling Stone* Ralph Gleason Award and the Deems Taylor Award, presented by the American  
Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, which might be the only time any publication  
has ever won both awards at the same time; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong fan of the Grand Ole Opry, Dr. Wolfe jokes that this book took him  
twenty years to write, and is a "cap stone culled from his many years of talking with the show's

early pioneers" along with thirty years of living in Middle Tennessee among the people that made the Opry what it is today; and

WHEREAS, in Dr. Wolfe's book, *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of The Grand Ole Opry*, the focus centers on the conceptual time period of the Opry, from 1925-40, giving a behind-the-scenes perspective of the inner workings of the famous live radio show; and

WHEREAS, as radio's longest-running live show, The Grand Ole Opry is still broadcasted weekly on the WSM radio station, which was first owned by the National Life & Casualty Insurance Company; and

WHEREAS, according to Dr. Wolfe, "when the Grand Ole Opry went on the air, the company made sure that everything, from equipment to the announcers, was 'first-class' quality." The title of Charles Wolfe's newest award-winning book was inspired by the Opry's first announcer, Judge George Hay, who once referred to the Opry as a "good natured riot"; and

WHEREAS, a nationally renowned historian, scholar, and author on the roots of American music, as well as a noted expert on Tennessee folklore and country music, Dr. Wolfe is a well-liked professor at the Middle Tennessee State University's Department of English, where he has taught for the last thirty years; he describes himself as "a cultural historian, specializing in folklore, music, and regional literature"; and

WHEREAS, a founder of, and expert at, the Center for Popular Music at MTSU, Charles Wolfe is an active member of the Tennessee Folklore Society, where he astutely serves as secretary, and is editor of the *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*, one of the nation's oldest regional folklore journals. He is also in charge of the Folklore Society's well-received sound recording series; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wolfe is a prolific writer, having written literally hundreds of essays and articles on folk, country, and popular music and has published sixteen books; he has thrice been nominated for Grammy Awards for his production and annotation of traditional music albums; and

WHEREAS, vast recognition of his many works has ranged from a prized collection of awards, publications, and achievements, a brief list of which includes: the Governor's Career Achievement Award, presented by Governor McWherter in 1988 for Dr. Wolfe's work in documenting Tennessee folk culture; the 1993 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly*, co-authored with Kip Lornell; the *Rolling Stone* Ralph Gleason Award, for *Nothing But The Blues*, in 1994; the Belmont-Curb Award for the best book on Country music, for *The Devil's Box: Masters of Southern Fiddling*, with an introduction by Mark O'Conner, in 1998; along with his two most recent awards for *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry*: the *Rolling Stone* Ralph Gleason Award and the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award; and

WHEREAS, over a year ago, Dr. Wolfe joined the information superhighway with the beginnings of an electronic column that he currently writes for CBS Cable's "country.com", entitled "Vintage Country"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wolfe has produced or annotated over one hundred sound recordings, and has produced or contributed to both national and international radio formats; and

WHEREAS, he has been interviewed and quoted in national periodicals including *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*; and

WHEREAS, in his spare time, Charles Wolfe enjoys maintaining an active international correspondence with fellow country and folk music scholars, writers, and fans; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to honor Dr. Charles Wolfe for his dedication and commitment to the growth and development of his students' minds at Middle Tennessee State University, and congratulate him on his recent literary success; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Dr. Charles K. Wolfe for his meritorious service to the state of Tennessee, congratulating him on his recent receipt of the ASCAP-

Deems Taylor Award for his book, *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry*, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.